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SPEAKERS

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last four days. I was at spirit rock, meditation center. Sitting retreat, maybe sitting retreats at night, not exactly the right expression here. I was a participant in the spirit rock Family Retreat. And so there wasn't much sitting there was spirit rock was transformed from a Silent Retreat Center to a noisy one. There were some hundred 60 people there and you know, I'm not at kids or something more anymore, running around. And those of you have been there might have been there that long. Hill goes from the dining area dining room optimization. That road was covered with chalk messages. Basically, mostly Method graffiti, multicolored method graffiti, messages of loving kindness, up and down. The reason I'm telling you now is that my my son was part of a group of kids and they had different things they did. And they guess they were, you know, teaching them something about mindfulness. I didn't quite understand this, but was kind of interesting was they gave each kid a beautiful rock. And the kids are supposed to keep that rock while their spirit rock. And the kids are supposed to always know where their rock was. And so if someone asked me where's your rock, you could say, Oh, it's in my room. in my pocket. There was no where the rock is. And that was supposed to somehow teach them mindfulness. Be present and know what's going on. And, and no idea if it did anything for my son. However, it did something interesting for me. And that is that when you have something really precious, it's, you know, it's good to know where it is. And one of the most precious things we have is our minds and their mind, or our heart. Indian word is citta, which can mean translate either as mind or heart. So one of the most precious things we have is the quality of our mind, the quality of our heart. And you know where it is. You know where your quality is, you know, where you know where your mind is. Are you in touch with thee. And I suspect that not a few of you, periodically during the day today, didn't know where your mind was. didn't have a clue didn't even occur to you to look for it. And maybe a few of you were actually surprised when you found it. No idea. That's the what was going on in there. So to always know where your mind is, where your heart is, and more important, I think is the quality of your mind. And I think that one of the ways of doing mindfulness meditation is to always stay close in touch with what the quality of your mind is like the quality of your heart, your quality of your mental state. And in order to safeguard and protect it in order to kind of help create a better quality of

mind. Because the process of meditation is a process of developing a better and better quality of mind, or better quality of mental and better quality and your mental state, your mind state or your heart state or your heartfelt disposition, kind of the Gestalt the overall kind of sense of who what's, how you are and you know, that content of your mind, what you think, for example, or even sometimes some of the things you feel, maybe is less important than the quality of your mind the quality of your awareness. And many, many people are negotiating their life, through their thoughts through their ideas. So if you're planning the future, you're in your thoughts about the future. If you're remembering the past, you're in those thoughts. If you're lost in fantasy, you're in those fantasy if you're trying to judge something or figure something out, you're in those worlds of thoughts or content, the ideas. There's something very important that's going on besides the content of your thoughts, and that is the quality of the mind in which those thoughts are happening. And so you know, what your quality of mind is. When you meditate, you know the quality of your mind. you're practicing some people when they practice meditation, for example, breath meditation or self fixated on the breath, or the fingers taking a breath is where it's supposed to be. That they actually don't know the quality of their mind. And I've known people who've got kind of strained, pushing, trying too hard to meditate, trying to not have to stay with a breath to hold on to it. I have to kind of stay with my breath long enough so that I can get into some wonderful mystical or spiritual experience. I could get someplace I could do something. Or there's all kinds of kind of attitudes that people can have towards the object of meditations, the practice of meditation technique that can actually create a bad quality of mind. You can get kind of a strain or headache or get tight or easily discouraged all kinds of ways that you can be. And when I told some people, we That's it, you know? But look, what's your quality, the quality of your mind when you're meditating? For some people, it's a big surprise that that's something to pay attention to, that never occurred to them. They're thinking Anything thing has to do this technique of watching the breath or watching the body or doing something. But the quality of your mind is much, much, much, much, much more important than your ability to stay with the breath. And you shouldn't and so when you're doing a meditation practice, like focusing on the breath, which is very helpful practice. You remember that's actually staying in touch with the quality of your mind is actually more important thing to do while you're doing the breath meditation. How am I doing this? Am I relaxed or am I tense? So the Buddha taught, they talked about mindfulness practice, one of the things he taught was pay attention to the quality of your mind, your mental state. And for those of you who know the Buddhist language, a Buddhist kind of the Buddha gave instructions. This is the third foundations of mindfulness. The Buddha gave four general areas you can pay attention to your practice, meditation, mindfulness meditation. One of them is the third foundations of mindfulness. And the third foundation of mindfulness is paying attention to the quality of your mind. And what's remarkable one of things that's remarkable about this is how simple the instructions are around the quality of your mind. One of the instructions is simply know if your mind is scattered, or if your mind is collected. If your mental state is scattered, so probably most of you have some experience of the mind being scattered, dispersed, the mind deliberating and thoughts and running off all directions, your thinking. And some of your thinking occasionally have in my experience of the mind being collected or settled, they really hear some quality away. So right now, for example, sitting here, what's the quality of your mind? Is it if it's a spectrum from being the mind being or the being settled on itself, or being scattered or

dispersed? How are you right now? revival being that spectrum from being scattered and being collected from being steadied centered or balanced to being kind of unbalanced. So, you can ask the question Where am I on that scale and when the Buddha gave instructions notice whether your mind is scattered or collected. That was it gave instruction notice if your mind is scattered or collected and then he did not say if it is scattered, collected. He did not say if it scattered. Judge it as being bad. He did not say if it's if you find it collected, he did not say congratulate yourself. take that as a badge to wear. Look at me, I'm a good meditator. All we did was say, notice if your mind is collected, and notice if your mind discolored, that's all. And then he also gave some simple instructions like, notice if your mind is your mental state is one that's filled with greed or influenced or flavored by greed? Or if greed is absent. Notice if there is a version or hate in your mind or not notice if your delusion or delusion in your mind or not. So very simple binary question yes or no kind of thing, you know, like kids do 20 questions yes or no? So is the mind scattered? Or is it collected? Is it tense? Or is it relaxed? You know, where is it in the spectrum? And then, is there greed or is there hate? Or is there delusion in the mind? Or is there not? It's meant to be very simple. And when you when there's greed in the mind or hating the mind again, he did not say, now feel really bad about yourself. You know, really get into it. It's really important to really feel like you're a terrible person and that you should you know, certainly not telling anyone that you have this and be embarrassed and he just said very simple very clean. To me it's very clean. There's just know that the mind then no no that in my mind state which is greedy no as a greedy mind state remarkably simple there's no it so one of the things that when even the Buddha was focusing on meant the mind state to the mental state, the quality of your mind, the instructions are simply know what it is. You're not it doesn't say change it, just know what it is. Just know what it is. And one of the ways of practicing mindfulness which can be quite revolutionary is to keep coming back and focusing on how things are in a simple knowing of how things are just to know What it is, and why I called revolutionary is the mind most of our minds most of our way we go through life many people is we don't leave things alone. We are, I would think most human beings are experts at attempting, not so good at succeeding, but attempting to fix the change and do something. And some of the things we try to do is we try to get things. We try to make things happen, better things to happen to get things from life. We try to push things away and have them not happen. Or we're kind of spinning our wheels being confused trying to figure out what was going on. And in some ways, there's always a lack of acceptance in the present moment of this moment. There's a lack of contentment or lack of ease, with this moment, this experience right now. And it says it's reasonable, to have non acceptance of many things in life. If you need to go pee, you know, you don't want to sit there and be content and accept that feeling. You know, you want to do something about it. But when you meditate, what we're trying to do is to revolutionize the usual way the mind operates, and be able to find a place where the mind is not reacting to things anymore, not wanting something to happen, and not wanting something to go away. Just this moment to know this moment as it actually is. So if the mind is tense, do you know this mind is tense? to really know that? The mind is thinking a lot. This mind is thinking this is a thinking mind. This is what thinking is. is not uncommon for meditators to win them to tennis idea that in meditation, you're not supposed to think the bane of meditators are thinking You have to figure out some way or other to get your thinking to stop, leave you alone those pesky flies, you know, it just keeps chasing, you're following you along, you know, you're able to follow half a breath and then

just catches up to you and takes over, passes you your your, your Boston thoughts for a few more breaths and then you come back. And I just have stopped those things I shouldn't be thinking I shouldn't be thinking it's bad to be thinking, you know, the instructions are I'm thinking are when you're thinking, know that you're thinking. That's all. Not to think it's bad or wrong with no you're thinking. So that kind of there's a theme here in the instructions, just know what's happening, why it's happening. And I say that is revolutionary, because it's diff so it differs from the usual way of engaging and manipulating, controlling and reacting to things. There's a very, very different mode for the mind to be in. And that mode has a number of advantages. One advantage is that it's less stressful than always reacting Engaging what's going on. And always involved in the content of your thoughts, the details, the ideas, stepping out of that the content, and just kind of having this more spacious place of knowing that this is what it is. Knowing what is happening right now. And just letting it that be enough in discovering in that knowing, contentment and ease a spaciousness and openness, a clarity that cannot be there. If we're up close to things, trying to do something to the world, or do things, do something to things. So if you're trying really hard to get concentrated, or crying really hard to get clear, or trying really hard to have some mystical experience or trying really hard to get away from something, oh, I had such a stressful day. And I just really need to kind of de stress it's a reasonable thought. But if you try too hard to get away from the stress, then you're playing it playing into the old mode. have always tried to change what's going on always engaging what's happening in the present moment, to the revolutionary thing is to step back from that and rely only on the knowing this is what's happening. This is what's happening. So when one of the things to know is to know something about the quality of the mind, how's it how's your how's your heart characterized right now? So is it tense or not? So if you're sitting and meditating trying to be present in the mind wanders away. You don't need to rush back to the present moment rush or rush back to the breath. You can just know Oh, my mind is thinking now. Mind just wandered off. And then you can ask yourself, what is the quality of the mind? That's wonder too often thought. What's that? What is it like what's happening here? Is it something very is it is there Is there something like that we can call greed involved? Is it that you the mind is somehow involved in wanting something to happen is that what's kind of propelling the thinking mind or is the quote is a is a mind being influenced by a version wanting something to not to go away or not happen or somehow the mind characterized by delusion. But the first two is particularly important is the mind engaged in wanting something or not wanting something to go away, and the tendency if you want something to happen, or if you want something not to happen or go away, if you engage in that, chances are very high, that the mind is stressful. The mind is constructed. And then as soon as you come back, just knowing Oh, the mind is being propelled by desire here it's shaped by desire. Then you can learn enough knowing its simplicity of knowing is you because I'm just step outside of the orbit of desire. You can really step outside the orbit of your thoughts, you're going to step outside of the orbit of aversion, or the step outside the orbit of tension. That makes sense. So instead of being into orbit and influenced by reacting by it, you step outside. So another analogy, maybe that I like is that of being in a maze, and see you're walking in this huge maze, it's endless, you know, and it's only, you know, it doesn't seem to be any way out at all. And you walk in for days and days and years, you know, this maze, trying to find your way out trying to find your way out. And then you figure out that you can take some strong branches and make stilts and so you because because the you know, the,

the wall of the maze is only like two inches above your eyes level. So if you get still so you can be higher and you can look over the top of the maze and you can see the whole layout, you can see where the path is. So the same thing if you can, step back out of the orbit out of the reactor. tivity to what's happening is simply no, this is what's going on, then you have a whole different perspective. And you're better chance for the mind to begin to relax, the mind will relax, the mind will relax by itself. If you stay in the knowing, in particular, if you say the knowing what's happening, and you're constantly checking in, what's the quality of the mind is knowing right now. And it's a very strong habit to feel like you have a bad quality of mind, you're stressed and tense and whatever, that you'll have to do something about that. And that's the operation of greed. There's desire to do something about that. So let's let's treat as operating there. So you know that Oh, look, I can know that. That's what's happening. Greed is happening. I'm tense. And when when you can rest in the knowing or just stay in the knowing and not try to make anything happen. That creates the condition for things to begin to release themselves or relieve themselves to relax. It can be it can be revolutionary. To do this, just come back in the know and just know this is what's happening. This is what's happening. It can be very hard to do because of the destroy very, very strong habits of the mind to always be manipulating or controlling or doing something engaging something or trying to make something happen. And but then nothing happened just to know what's happening, what's happening. And this knowing knowing what's happening is something that's meant to be in the instructions of the Buddha. A very simple thing to do. that all of us can do. And are all of us are doing all the time. So as you're sitting here, listening to me Can you feel what your Can you feel what your right hand feels like? Trust most of the head right hands Feel your right hand. So in feeling your right hand, you know, the vibration, the warmth, the coolness, the pulsing. The sensations there, the weight, the substance. Can you feel that? I suspect that that's something most of you can feel pretty readily. It's rather unglamorous. It's just something simple and basic. And the knowing of that hand, the sensations in the hand, is a very simple act of knowing something. It's very simple. It's easy to do anybody find that hard, difficult to, to sense and feel your hand. Anybody would admit that it is difficult. It's a relatively simple thing to do. What is hard to do? So mindfulness is not meant to be something hard, it's actually very easy to be mindful. It's as easy as knowing your hand. What's hard to do is to sustain the attention or to do Do it repeatedly to do it continuously. That's what's hard. So you can, you know, I could tell you to connect to your hand and stay there. And then within a few seconds or a minute or so your mind will probably wander off. So what's difficult is the staying in that very simple place. If you think that mindfulness is is technically difficult, and your mind begins, kind of, you know, going into technical mode and trying to figure out what am I supposed to do here? And how is supposed to be supposed to be really refined and look at the details of the breath here and, you know, whatever, Dennis on mindfulness, then you've lost the mindfulness. Mindfulness is supposed to be as simple as knowing the sensations of your hand. So if you pay attention to the quality of your mind, it's something you know, what is it you were really easily that you want to think about? The quality of your heart or your inner disposition? How are you disrupting right now. So you know, I was that was obvious so you could turn in and feel that which was obvious right now for you. Are you quiet? Are you curious? Are you bored? Are you inspired? Are you discouraged? Are you open and receptive to what I'm saying, you know, open, receptive or, you know, caught up in your inner world and thoughts and judgments and ideas and kind of reacting to what's

being said, What is it? What's obvious if you turn it in and say, what's going on my mind? How's my mind right now? What do you feel that's obvious? So that's how easy what's difficult is to is to keep doing this easy thing. Right. That's what's hard. And so the practice of mindfulness is the practice of learning to do it. See thing more and more continuously. So you stay Come back, come back come back. But it's there's a really there's a beautiful thing here. If your mind if when your mind wanders away and your mind is lost in his thoughts there's no problem because if you're lost in your thoughts, you're not even aware of what's going on. How can you have a problem? You don't use last. But when you wake up in aware, I'm thinking you were what's going on. Mindfulness is so simple. All it is is a knowing that you've been lost, knowing that you're caught up in your thoughts. That's simple knowing it If you notice that you've been lost in your thoughts, and you start judging it and reacting to it and jerking the mind around, pouncing, the mind back on the breath, I'm supposed to be with the breath. There's all these complicated ways, that is not mindfulness practice. The mindfulness practice, mindfulness practice was already happening. And this is like this magic thing in my first practice. So if you get lost in your thoughts, sooner or later, I guarantee it, you'll notice that you're not present. And the very moment that you notice in our present, that moment is a moment of mindfulness. And so you're doing it. So you can actually doesn't make any sense ever to judge yourself. is not doing the practice. Never would have that, meditator I am because either you're so lost. You can't judge If you have the ability to judge, there was no need to. Because in order to be somewhat present to judge, you have to know it makes sense. So it's like, you know, you just the judging is not accurate. It's about the past. So the idea here is to stay really simple. Oh, my mind wandered off and thought, kind notice, what's the quality of the mind that was wondering often thought, My tense in my versus, in my, you know, my mind contracted? Is my mind scattered. What's the quality what's happening here, this mind. So we're just kind of noticing what's happening, and then staying without noticing it being present for it. And in the knowing of that, the knowing is meant to be open, relaxed, at ease. That's a quality Mind we're looking for, there is no meditation. Mindfulness Meditation cannot unfold in the way it unfolds or through time, unless the quality of the mind is somehow relaxed or at ease. And so this knowing is one of the keys to this just knowing and learn having the having understanding that it's enough just to take refuge in the knowing, oh, I just know what's happening. I know what's happening now. No, no. And it can be very hard because of the habit is not good enough. I'm not good enough. It has to be different. Just come back to the No Oh, no. Oh, now. I'm engaged and thinking it should be different. That's, Oh, I know that I think I'm thinking, just come back to the knowing you don't have to make anything different. Even your attempts to make things different. Doesn't have to stop. Me confusing you. Trying to make it really simple. I'm actually trying to say is just know what's happening while it's happening. And leave it at that you know, what's happening, what's happening and leave it at that. And in that process of knowing what's happening, what's happening, it's helpful to check into the quality of your mind. What is it is it tense or is it not? Is it scattered? Or is it not, you know, it is not this is not either one or the other is a spectrum. And one of the ways to unwind is not to is just to just to stay with the knowing stay with the noise. So, analogy I like to use is that of like a bathtub, as long as the drain is plugged up. The water is gonna stay in the bathtub. If you unplug the plug, then the water will drain out. So with net the nature water does. If your mind is all filled up, if you can find the drain to open it, all the stuff that's filling your mind will slowly settle out. My only complaint is peaceful. So if you stop

adding to it, start filling it and doing things in mind left alone will settle. The analogy I think many of you know the ones used a lot in our tradition is that of a muddy pond. And if you want to demand pontoon boat to settle, you don't come and stir it up. Because it just keeps the mud stirred up, you leave the pond alone and the pond settles. And then the time becomes clear. And you can see what's in there. So same thing with a mind. If we're always reacting to the mind or judging or you know, then With the mind can settle. But if we come back to the knowing the know, the knowing is the place we stopped interfering, the knowing is the place we stop stirring things up. So we, we use a credit a content of knowing whatever it is if something has arisen in the mind and medication. If something has happened in the mind. There's no need for it not to have happened. It's just something else to know. You can have murderous thoughts. Nice. Oh, look at that. There's murderous thoughts. If there if you have simply thoughts, look at that. You don't have to congratulate yourself. Oh, now simply parties know that's what's happening. If you have these thoughts that say this is not good enough. Just knowing what's there is boring. I want something exciting. I want bright lights. A great kind of, I've heard that you're supposed to have these great unions with the cosmos when you meditate, great oneness experiences. That's what I really want. Knowing desire for oneness. Knowing that this is not good enough knowing that and knowing that I'm angry at Gill for teaching such a simple practice, knowing that, you know, just knowing, knowing coming back to the knowing, just trusting the non trusting, knowing, come back knowing whatever it is. So if something arises when attitude is helpful meditation if something arises in the mind, it's kind of a superstitious, baby, but useful attitude is if something happens in your meditation, in the mind, of certain feelings or emotions, or thoughts or ideas or whatever. Just assume it was meant to happen. It was supposed to happen, and it needed to happen. So what happened? And now your job is to take refuge to no just to know, to come back to the knowing. Come back to the No, no, no. Okay, I know it. murderous rage. I know. I know. I know. It's not pleasant. I know that it's not pleasant. And I know that he knows that. I know, I know, people knowing back to the knowing. With time, as we begin developing the continuity of this over time, one of the remarkable things that will happen is that you'll start getting a sense that the knowing quality with the mind, knowing capacity of the mind, is to use kind of non technical language or non language. The knowing quote in mind is a thing in itself. It's like a muscle, or it's like a jewel, or it's like a place of strength or it's a it's a breath Huge, it's an island, it's a thing, you know, whereas you normally most of us know things all the time. That's what the mind does. You're driving down El Camino and you know, it's a red light, you know, the people driving around you, you know, you're driving you know, you're, you know, you know, all kinds of things, you're always knowing something. So knowing you know, just kind of like what human beings do, but it's seldom that quality of knowing has become strong and big and luminous. And like you really feel palpably presence, which some people feel probably present is their desire, their irritation, or their, you know, their thoughts, their confusion or all kinds of other things. But as we develop this knowing and to take refuge in as we develop the knowing capacities, knowing knowing trusting, it's good enough to know but knowing knowing knowing that knowing becomes stronger and stronger, more and more larger, spacious and, and then it becomes really clear that you have this place or refuge that gives you a sense of equanimity of peace of spaciousness with that you can take the punches in life a lot easier. So, what's coming to mind is another analogy I use sometimes my intro class I apologize to those of you have heard it too many times. silly example,

come up with new examples. Knowing that I'm thinking I should come up with your examples. Knowing that I'm thinking that I'm doing for you. Right, just know that I'm doing it. Okay. That's how it is. I'll tell you anyway. So you know, if you if you're into a small elevator that's meant for three to two people, and it's you and he's for other people. As for you know, big huge Huge, monstrous, kind of we something people really sloppy people, you know, and they have ketchup from fruit over there, who you know, and they, you know, they're still eating, you know, and they come to over the eating still their, their hamburgers with a sketch of a squeezing out, you know, and they smell and they stink in there, you know, just kind of like so much bigger than you and you go into this little elevator and they squeeze all around you and you can hardly breathe and you're up against their belly buttons. You know, and, you know, you feel kind of claustrophobic because it's pretty tight, right? And it's kind of awful. But then, that's one scenario. And other kind of scenario is the same for people and you are in a huge, huge, cavernous Cathedral. And you're all spread out, you know, and all kind of equal distance from each other. You're like 360 degrees over there's one person and there's no other person in all the space is big space above you and you see those other people. And then it's really easy to, to love all of humanity. Oh, you know why everyone's so wonderful. You know, I can just feel how loving I feel I love these people, as well. So, you know, if you create a lot of space, it's possible to accept a lot of things that if you don't have the space you can accept. So same thing with your inner life. If you create a lot of space in the mind, room in the mind, then it's possible to accept things, but the mind is claustrophobic. It's like really hard to accept things really tense. The thing that creates room in the mind is the knowing where is awareness. So if you use your knowing the awareness, know what's happening, you start creating more room. And then rather than having some eating something that might have a lot of room, you don't have to get the difficult things in your mind or your heart to go away. To be peaceful at ease. They can still be there. But you can actually love them and be very spacious and generous about them, because you're not in being impinged by it. Because the mind is so big, the awareness is so big. So when the Buddha gave instructions on this third foundations of mindfulness, he also said, notice if your mental state is expanded or not. Know it, notice that your mental state has expanded. Probably many of you know what a contracted state is, like. I hope you do because if you don't, then you probably are. Just don't know it. And so you know, you're Come on tight and caught up in something and you can't go go and just like that's contracted mind state. As you keep developing the knowing quality, knowing quality making room in the mind, and the room actually can feel infinitely expansive. It's amazing how much RAM you can put inside this little skull. skull. You know how big it is? It's pretty small. But you know, you can actually make the mind bigger than this room maybe in this building bigger than this, you know, state becomes infinite, boundless, the word first word is boundless, boundless mind. And it's the knowing quality. That was it's really key to developing this boundless open quality of mind. It's the knowing quality and the continuity of keep coming back to the knowing, developing that continuity, developing that continuity, knowing what's happening, nothing's happening. So it takes knowing that that's important to do that It takes some confidence or trust or some giving it the benefit of the doubt, to keep coming back to this very revolutionary thing very radically different thing and what most people do with their minds, just keeping back to knowing, knowing even when things are difficult even when things feel uncomfortable, even when you're screaming and saying it should be different. Knowing that I want to scream, knowing, knowing,

knowing I am screaming, knowing, knowing. And as you know, what's the quality of the mind? Am I trying too hard to know? Gil said, practice knowing and having to really do it well. What's the quality of the mind? He said, Oh, I'm tense around trying to do it, right. Oh, you feel that tension? Do you feel that tension really well. Your mind can stay tense eventually, it'll begin to solve And relax. Eventually might be in 30 seconds. Eventually it might be a week or two. But sooner or later it will. Have you ever had someone tell you, you know, oh look, you're so tense. You look so tense, is it? Oh yes, just in saying and recognizing it, you begin relaxing. Just a knowing of it, something relaxes. So you can do that with a mind to just knowing. So I could continue repeating myself. For another 45 minutes if you'd like. One form or other I kept trying to say over and over again. Just stay with the knowing. I hope I didn't confuse you. The intention was to make it simple. And I'd encourage you to try keeping it that simple to stay within apologize, I talked the whole time. So maybe we shouldn't do any questions. And so I hope you have a wonderful month of August. And we have a whole series of really wonderful people coming to speak on Monday nights. And I will be back, I guess. I guess it's Labor Day Monday. We'll be here to labor together. Thank you.